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To: Microsoft ATR
Date: 11/17/01 3:41pm
Subject: Microsoft is an abusive monopoly

Microsoft is an abusive monopoly. It has routinely engaged in illegal actions to drive its competition out of business. Sometimes the actions are borderline, and sometimes (I wanted to write occasionally) they are even legal.

I will admit that many of the actions that I have characterized as illegal would, in fact, be legal were Microsoft not a monopoly. But it is. And it routinely acts, both tactically and strategically, to restrain trade.

The Stac case is a case in point. At that time Microsoft may not actually have been a monopoly, though I feel that it was one. Still, it appropriated the software that Stac had written against their express desires and included it within the Windows source code. (At this point the value of the Stac company took a strong hit.) When challenged in court, Microsoft tied things up for a long time, and then replaced the challenged code with code from another company (that they got cheap...it wasn't anywhere near to being as good). I don't remember the details here, but Stac was now in such bad shape that Microsoft was able to buy it up for an extremely cheap price. Nobody has dared to challenge them similarly since then, and that was over twenty years ago. But they've spent the time since then improving their monopoly, if not their software.

Please do not misunderstand me. I doubt that any other monopoly would have been much better. Monopolies tend to engage in unsavory practices, and large successful monopolies tend to assume that criminal law doesn't apply to them. They usually seem to prove themselves correct, but I had had some slight hope that this wouldn't have been another such case. It's been quite blatant.

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Charles Hixson

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